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FOOTWEAR WITH INTEGRATED STITCHDOWN/ ATHLETIC BOTTOM CONSTRUCTION

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

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[0001] The present invention is a continuation of U.S. Application Number 10/238,480, filed on September 10, 2002 ^{^ now patent No. 6,757,990} entitled "Footwear with Integrated Stitchdown/Athletic Bottom Construction," incorporated herein by reference in its entirety, which is a divisional of U.S. Application Number 09/662,993, filed on September 15, 2000 entitled "Footwear with Integrated Stitchdown/Athletic Bottom Construction", now issued as U.S. Patent Number 6,484,420 on November 26, 2003, incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to upper/insole assemblies for use in constructing articles of footwear that integrate stitchdown construction methods with athletic bottom components and methods for producing such articles of footwear and upper/insole assemblies.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Articles of footwear have been designed and worn by humans since very early in recorded history. Articles of footwear were initially designed to protect the tender bottom portion of the feet of wearers while walking or running over rough surfaces. Although the primary purpose of footwear remains basically unchanged, the various types of activity and surfaces in which humans run, walk, or stand on have led to an ever increasing diversity in the style and construction of footwear. Footwear construction and design have also focused on providing better ankle and arch support while retaining flexibility. Fashion and personal taste have also played significant roles leading to the increase in types of footwear.

[0004] Humans engage in a wide variety of physical activities. Some of these activities include walking, running, jogging, sprinting and other track and field events, backpacking, playing tennis, cross-training, golfing, playing soccer, and